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# The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, NOVEMBER, 1853.

plements, and learnt with astonishment that, by the law of the country, he must submit to having the bandage placed over his eyes, sealed with the arms of the government, and then give himself up to be led by the hand as long as he lived. If ever he attempted to remove the bandage, or was found trying to peep under it, the law condemned him to death. Justly alarmed at this statement, he was turning his back upon the strangers; but they collared him, declaring that, as he had crossed the gate, he could not be allowed to return.

"As there was no hope of escape for the present, he humbly entreated to be informed why he was to be deprived of the use of his sight, and kept for life in darkness, under the flood of sunbeams which heaven poured daily upon the world. To this the eldest of the strange men made answer:—'Many generations have passed away since the throne of this country was filled by a king, whose wisdom and goodness greatly surpassed that of the wisest and best of men. This king had a minister, to whom he gave a surname, which, in the language of our forefathers, signified EYES. It happened on a certain day, that the king, sitting in council with minister EYES, and his other ministers, twelve in all, proposed a question, about which many things were said, but none to the purpose. EYES, who certainly was a very quick and able man, observing the perplexity of his brethren in office, came forward with such a short and neat answer, that the king, to express his great satisfaction, broke out into these words: EYES, you well deserve the name you bear, for you are EYES, and through your eyes all my kingdom see. These words of our king we consider as the fundamental law of this realm; and from them we conclude that it is the duty of the people to renounce their natural sight, and to see through the eyes which our king appointed for his subjects.'

"Astonished at this account, and perceiving that the two strangers were not disinclined to a little more conversation, the traveller asked whether that great man, minister EYES, was still alive? 'No, no,' replied the man in gray, with a smile; 'he has been dead nearly two thousand years.' 'Indeed!' exclaimed the traveller; 'how then can he see for all the people here?' 'You seem, my friend,' replied the man in black, 'rather dull of apprehension; do you not understand, that since EYES was to see for all other men, some one must for ever occupy his place?' 'Did your king say so?' rejoined the travellers. 'Our king did not say anything about the matter,' answered the gray man with rising anger, 'but he could not but have meant it.' 'Allow me once more to inquire,' said the traveller, 'how is it you find a supply of successors to EYES?' 'We have some notion,' said one of the turnpike men, 'of the spot where it is said that he died.' We accordingly choose one of ourselves to be EYES' successor; and when we have seated the person so elected in a chair, on that very spot, we take him to be in every respect as good to see for others as old EYES himself.'

"Here the unfortunate traveller lost all patience. 'So then,' he cries, 'I am to lose the use of my eyes, because you choose to understand literally a figurative expression, which a child could not mistake. But what a huge mountain of suppositions and inferences you go on to raise on that contemptible ground! Because your old minister had a penetrating understanding, and while he lived could be what his master called him, the EYES—that is, the guide, of his people—you take upon yourselves to set up a succession of men, who, be they ever so dull and stupid, are yet to be recognised as EYES for all the world, and to have the right of blindfolding us all. But how comes it that neither of you wear a bandage? 'Your impudence deserves another kind of answer; but I will bear with you a little longer,' said the man in black. 'There are many thousands like ourselves in this kingdom; we are EYES' eyes; and through us the people are to see all that old EYES would see for them if he still were alive. But as you wish to live,' he added with great solemnity, 'let me put the bandage on your eyes, and do not be obstinate about a point established beyond all doubt, by that saying of our great king—'EYES, YOU ARE EYES, AND BY YOUR EYES SHALL ALL MY KINGDOM SEE.'"

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The letters of Mr. O'Mara, Mr. Collette, and several other valued communications have been unavoidably postponed till our next.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st.

No anonymous letter can be attended to. Whatever is sent for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for his good faith.

We would request our correspondents, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, to limit the length of their communications, and not to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

If any of our friends could favour us with a copy or copies of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, Nos. 2, 8, or 11, to complete sets, we should be greatly obliged.

THE vastest truth or the vastest falsehood which has ever agitated the world, is the doctrine of the Church of Rome's infallibility. If that doctrine be true, millions of human souls have been lost for ever for not believing it. If it be false, millions of human souls have been lost for trusting to it. Surely it behoves every man, who regards his own safety and that of others dear to him, to examine this vast structure and its foundations carefully, and satisfy himself whether it be built upon a rock, and supported by pillars strong enough to bear its weight, or whether it rest on an unsound and shifting foundation, in which latter case he might discover, when too late, that he was like the foolish man spoken of by our Blessed Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, "who built his house upon the sand, and the rains fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."—Matt. vii. 26, 27 (Douay Bible).

What an almost infinite amount of dreadful distractions, divisions, persecutions, errors, and mischiefs which have arisen in the world about the truth or falsehood of the pretensions of the Church of Rome, would have been prevented, if God had been only pleased to say in the Scriptures—"I have constituted the Church of Rome the mother and mistress of all Churches, and made the Bishop of Rome my vicegerent upon earth, and an infallible interpreter of my will to all my people, to guide them into all truth." If those propositions be a true exposition of God's will, we think they would have been as plainly stated in God's written Word as it is stated, again and again, "He that believeth in the Son shall have everlasting life;" and if one could venture to trust one's reason so far as to argue that anything *must* be so, because it would be useful or fitting that it *should* be so, we can see no possible answer to the argument that it would have been wholly inconsistent with the goodness of God, and His plain desire in giving us the Scriptures, and the care of Christ over his Church, to omit in the Bible a point so all important (if it be true) as the infallibility of the Church of Rome, on which all the rest was to depend, when doctrines of so much less concernment are plainly recorded, and over and over again repeated, in the Scriptures. If God had intended the Pope or Church of Rome for so great an office, reason and common sense proclaim that He would certainly have said so, very plainly and very frequently, or if not frequently, certainly sometimes; once, at least, surely He would have said so in express terms, so that none but those who wilfully shut their eyes could fail to see it.

Those who trust their reason sufficiently to argue that there *must* be a living and speaking judge to decide differences about the interpretation of the law, because otherwise controversies would be endless, might surely as well argue that God has not given us such a judge, or He could not have failed to point him out to us, or left us in the dark as to who he is, and where he is to be certainly found.

If it were as evident and certain that God hath appointed the Pope or the Church of Rome to be the guide of faith and judge of controversies, as that the Queen hath appointed such a one to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Chief Justice, we admit such a guide would be very valuable,

and easily available, to preserve the Church in unity, and conduct men's souls to heaven. But a judge that had no better *evidence* of his title to his place, than the Pope has to that which he pretends to—a judge that is doubtful, and justly questionable whether he be, indeed, a judge or not—we think would be, in all probability, likely to produce just the opposite effects, and to be himself one of the greatest subjects of controversy and difference between men, as in point of fact we actually find to be the case with respect to the Church of Rome.

Whether Protestants be right or wrong, true Christians or heretics, there are *millions* of them in actual existence in England and Ireland alone, who still deny, as their ancestors have for centuries denied, the title of the Church of Rome to guide mankind, and who will neither *take for granted* that title without proof, or assume that Church to be infallible merely because she herself says so; but who are ever ready to retort the argument—"It is necessary there should be an infallible judge, *therefore* there is such a judge; by the argument, that "God has not provided, or ever said He has provided, such a judge; *therefore* such a judge is not necessary." And, indeed, we think all fair men, who venture to exercise their understandings in *a priori* reasonings, would admit, that if the doctrine of the Church of Rome be true—that an infallible judge is of such necessity, that without him we cannot understand, and are not even bound to believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that submission to that judge is necessary to our salvation—it would be a thousand times more incredible that God (to whom all our present controversies must have been foreseen) should not have left us some mention of it in the Scriptures, than the contrary proposition would be—viz., that He should have not given us such a judge at all, because He considered such a judge unnecessary for us. If we were to consider usefulness a sufficient proof of the existence of anything, by a similar argument we could clearly prove that every Pope must have been a good man, and every priest infallible, and all the translators of the Bible infallible; and, more than all, that the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy and infallibility must be engraven upon every man's heart, or at least so plainly revealed in God's written Word, that none but the most wilful and obstinate heretics could deny it, none in fact except such men as it would be, according to the same rule, fitting and *useful* were God to send down fire from heaven to consume them.

But it is not pretended by the Church of Rome, either that none of the Popes have been bad men, or that no Popes have fallen into error and made important mistakes, both in matters of fact and doctrine, or that all priests or even all bishops are infallible, or that their own Douay Bible is an infallible translation, or that the Pope's supremacy and infallibility are matters of instinct, which require no proof; *therefore* the fitness, the great utility, or desirableness of such things is clearly no proof whatever of their existence, and, by parity of reasoning, the utility and desirableness of an infallible tribunal is no proof at all of the existence of one.

The argument, therefore, from what is called by some common sense, appears to be resolvable into nothing more than what is fully answered by saying, that *wishing* is not *having*, any more than mere *assertion*, however bold, is *proof*.

Those, therefore, who would not be induced blindly to jump to a conclusion, and by the process which is called "begging the question," assume it to be mere pride of understanding which prevents Protestants from submitting to the guidance of the Church of Rome, must take the pains to examine the nature and strength of the pillars on which its pretensions rest, and see whether they are built on a rock or on the sand

remembering that a man may be very willing to follow a guide, when he first sees good ground to believe that it is his guide, but that, as it is *humility* to obey him whom God hath plainly set over us, so it is *credulity* to follow every one that will take on him to lead us—inasmuch as, “if the blind lead the blind,” not only the leader but the follower shall perish.

We purpose in regular course examining, fully and seriatim, the various grounds and pillars on which this vast fabric of the Church's infallibility is said by her ablest advocates to rest—viz., Scripture, the Fathers, tradition, and miracles—and we think all who have the manliness and courage to examine and discuss the matter with us, in a fair spirit and unprejudiced mind, will probably ultimately come to the same conclusion at which we have ourselves arrived—viz., that it is neither necessary nor suitable to the method of God's providence and the declarations of His will, that there should be a final end and infallible judge of all controversies in this life—that what the advocates of Rome tell us was fit to be done, God hath told us He did not judge fit—that it was His pleasure to permit the Evil One to sow tares among the wheat, and heresies to arise (1 Cor. xi. 19); and that even as He thought fit to allow stones of stumbling and rocks of offence to exist for the punishment of disobedient and wicked men, so for sincere Christians, who live holily and humbly, believe and pray fervently, and seek the true way diligently, He hath not thought such an earthly judge necessary, but hath Himself provided for them another safe and certain way to all saving truth, by giving them the promise of His Spirit to guide them into all essential truth, so that they may say with the Psalmist, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me into glory” (Psalm lxxiii. 24); and if they be so guided and kept by God's power by faith unto salvation (1 Peter i. 5), we think there is no reason for any one to despond for lack of guidance, but on the contrary, we may safely ask, what need a Christian desire more?

## Correspondence.

### INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—In the last number of your monthly journal I find the following sentence, viz.:—“Will any of the Bishops or Priests of the Church of Rome now come forward, in or out of our pages, to grapple with and discuss the question of the boasted infallibility of their Church?” &c. (page 104.)

I beg leave to say, in answer to this defiance, that the Bishops and Priests of the Church of Rome have the requirements of their flock (lately so wonderfully increased by conversions from Protestantism) to attend to—their episcopal and sacerdotal duties to perform—and, consequently, cannot afford to lose any time by the discussion of questions which they have repeatedly, over and over again, proved to the satisfaction of every man, whose reason is not hood-winked by prejudice, and who does not allow, to use a vulgar word, the “times” of this world to overrule and nullify his firm convictions. But the Roman Catholic layman will come forward to “shiver a spear” with you; and, notwithstanding their “intellects being confined and their souls enslaved,” are able to prove any article of their creed which you may assail. As an humble and unlearned member of this body, I undertake to prove, in a simple, concise, but, I trust, cogent manner the infallibility of the Church which our Lord established on earth.

This infallibility of the Church I discover in the positive and most unequivocal promises of our Lord Jesus Christ—viz., “Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—Matt. xvi. 18, Protestant Bible. If the Church could possibly teach errors, then the gates of hell could prevail against her, contrary to the above promise. Therefore she is infallible.

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, P. B. Our Lord, addressing his

twelve Apostles on the present occasion, speaks to all his ministers, successors of the Apostles to the end of time, which I think needs no proof.

Now, sir, upon that subject I form the following argument, which I defy any one to refute. Christ promises that He will be with His Apostles, baptizing, teaching, and preaching to all nations, until the consummation of time. Now, Christ cannot tell a lie; therefore, it is evident that Christ has fulfilled His promise, and that during these 1800 years past He has been with His ministers, and that He will continue to be with them to the end of time; and that He will accompany and guide them when they preach his word and administer his sacraments. Therefore, His Church is infallible.

“And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.”—John xiv. 16, 17, P. B.\* It appears that Christ asked his Heavenly Father to bless his ministers, the pastors of his Church, with the spirit of truth for ever. Pray, sir, did Christ ever offer up any prayer in vain? And if his prayer was heard, how could the Church teach any false doctrine? Therefore, she is infallible.

“Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—Ephes. v. 24, 25, 26, 27, P. B. The Church is always subject to Christ—that is, not only under him, but ever obedient to his words and commandments. Which is an evident and invincible demonstration that she never rebelled against Christ, never falleth from him by error, idolatry, or false worship. Therefore, she is infallible.

We also see by this passage from St. Paul, that Christ loves the Church, for which he suffered his passion; but if she was liable to err, He could not love her. Therefore, she is infallible.

“And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.”—Matt. xvii. 17, P. B. By this, it appears, if I refuse to hear the Church that I am an outcast, and no better than the heathen. Our Lord would never command me to hear the Church, nor punish me so severely for refusing to hear her, if that Church could teach me anything contrary to his holy law, or lead me astray, by teaching antichristian doctrines. Of this I am as satisfied as I am of my own existence. Therefore, I most firmly and undoubtedly believe that the Church is infallible.

With these plain texts of the Sacred Volume staring you in the face, how could you, with any show of reason, make Edith Marley insinuate, in the discussion between her and the Roman Catholic bishop, that the Church which Christ founded on earth departed from the things that he commanded, and taught other things?—CATHOLIC LAYMAN, page 100, September number. And here let me parenthetically observe, that you were not guided by the spirit of impartiality (pardon me for saying so) in conducting that discussion, because you make the argument against the Sacrifice of the Mass as strong and as powerful as Protestants can make it; but the argument in its defence is weak, poor, impotent. Is that fair? Is it honourable? This, however, may be excusable, but I say it is almost unpardonable to wilfully mutilate, as you have done, the text from the prophecy of Malachy, in this discussion.

In this story of the Marleys you represent the Roman Catholic bishop and Major Marley as being grossly ignorant; the former not knowing where to find, in the Bible, the Prophecy of Malachias; and the latter a Roman Catholic, having never heard a word of the Gospel of our Lord.

Now, this is a frightful calumny on both priests and people; and violates, in a shameful manner, one of God's holy and eternal commands—viz., “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” Allow me to tell you that it is not by calumny that your journal can command the attention and respect of Roman Catholics. They treat a journal in which such appears with supreme contempt. I beg now to give a quotation, on the infallibility of the Church of Christ, from a work recently published:—

“But when He, the spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth.”—John xvi. 13, P. B. “The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.”—1 Tim. iii. 15, P. B. If the Church itself, as it comes out of the hands of God, is the very ground and pillar of truth, it will hardly want the reforming hand of corrupted man to put it right; it will always teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and instead of reforming this, or attempting to do so, the most precious of all the works and institutions of God, you and I must be reformed by it.

To quote all the texts that prove the holy Church of Jesus Christ to be infallible, or invested by Christ with a supreme and unerring authority in matters of faith, would be endless. I said, that we discover this unerring authority even in the dictates of common sense. Yes, common sense tells us that the works of God are perfect in their kind.

Now, the Church being most emphatically the work of

\* It is curious that though Mr. Rourke marks his quotations P. B.—meaning, as we suppose, “Protestant Bible”—none of them in reality are from the authorized version.

God, it most assuredly must be perfect; the Church, however, must be very imperfect, indeed, if it wants the main perfection, which, as our guide and director to heaven, it must have, that of always teaching truth: that of always supplying the wants of our limited and corrupted reason: that of always carrying before our eyes the bright and Divine light of revelation.

Show us a Church which is not infallible, which owns itself fallible, wanting, of course, the main perfection which the Church of Christ must have, and you show us a Church of corrupted man, not the Church of Christ. Common sense tells us that without an infallible tribunal unanimity in faith is a thing impossible. Without a centre of unity, a fixed standard, an absolute and infallible tribunal, a living oracle to determine the mind, it is absolutely impossible that men, framed as they are, should ever come to one and the same way of thinking. Whoever renounces this infallible authority of the Church, has no longer any sure means to secure him against uncertainties, and to settle his doubts; he is in a sad and perplexed situation, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

We are confirmed in the above suggestions of common sense by our observations. Unity in faith we find nowhere but in the Catholic Church. Above two hundred millions of Catholics, scattered over the face of the earth, are perfectly one in matters of faith. We meet from the most distant parts of the globe, ignorant of one another's language, manners, &c., yet our thoughts and principles about religion and its mysteries are exactly alike. Pray is that unity to be found among those who have shaken off the authority of the Church? Since they have presumed to reform (as they call it) the Catholic Church, what do we see but one reformation on another, hundreds and hundreds of different Churches, one rising on the ruins of another, each styling itself the Church of Christ, each appealing to the Gospel for the orthodoxy of her doctrine, each calling her ministers ministers of Christ, each calling the sermons of her ministers the Word of God, &c., &c? Can we be wrong in believing that our pastors are really in possession of the power which Christ himself asserts He gave them, and which he promises shall remain with them for ever; since Jesus Christ has pledged his sacred veracity for the existence of those several powers in the Pastors of his Church, and since he has likewise promised that the very fountain of truth, the Holy Ghost, shall be and remain with those pastors for ever, we should think ourselves guilty of a great sin if we refused submission, of either understanding or will, to their decisions and their precepts; and of a most daring presumption and diabolical pride, if we would ever, for one moment, permit our limited reason to sit in judgment over the decisions and precepts of those, whom Jesus Christ declares to be guided by the Holy Ghost for ever.

Seeing, then, that the pastors of the Church of Christ have always been secured by the infinite power of God against the danger of being led astray, and leading those under their care astray into false and erroneous doctrines, we rest assured under their guidance, knowing that the understanding of the most transcendent genius can never penetrate into the mysteries of the Most High; we, both learned and unlearned, take the only safe way of submission—that path in which the Holy Spirit assures us that “the very fools cannot err.”—Isa. xxxv. 8, Protestant Bible.

Now, every person whose mind is susceptible of conviction, on reading those plain texts of the Holy Scriptures, and the unvarnished comments thereon, must discover that the Church which our Lord established on earth is infallible; and I defy any man to prove that any other but the Roman Catholic Church is this true, unerring Church, which hitherto has continued “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” and will continue to the end of time in transcendent purity and heavenly truth. This Church will be teaching the doctrine of Jesus when the apostate temples—whose “profane novelties” distract the world—shall have ceased to exist, and, if remembered, only to be deprecated.

I am, Mr. Editor, your very humble servant,

WILLIAM ROURKE.

P.S.—May I request that you will give this letter (to which you may append, if you like, a fictitious name) a place in the next number of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, that your Protestant readers may see that there exists on earth an infallible Church.—W. R.

We cannot say that we think our correspondent's excuse of “want of leisure” is a satisfactory explanation of the obstinate silence with which the Roman Catholic clergy have hitherto shunned all controversy in our pages. Some of those in the West of Ireland, at least, we certainly think might of late have found some spare time on their hands. We find, however, in the letters we receive from the educated Roman Catholic laity, compensation for the silence of their clergy. Though the priests may think it no part of their business to satisfy the doubts of Protestants, no doubt they consider it their duty to find time to instruct their own flocks, and to supply them with the best arguments for the authority of their Church that are to be had. Mr. Rourke's spiritual guide has certainly not neglected his duty in this respect. We do not think that any priest in Ireland can supply better arguments for the infallibility of his Church than those which our correspondent has so cleverly brought forward. If, therefore,